



Equitable Food-Oriented Development: The Origin Story

Prepared for the EFOD Collaborative | May 2021



FINDING
PROMISE
FUELING
CHANGE

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EFOD session in Albany, Georgia (New Communities/Resora), 2018. EFOD leaders present include (L-R): Amber Bell (Southwest Georgia Project), Rudy Espinoza (Inclusive Action for the City), J. Hackett (Green Opportunities), Mariela Cedeño (Mandela Partners), Hilda Roque (Nuestras Raíces), Dennis Bagneris (Liberty’s Kitchen), Neelam Sharma (Community Services Unlimited), Haleh Zandi (Planting Justice), Lorena Andrade (La Mujer Obrera)
Photo credit: EFOD Collaborative

INTRODUCTION

"I think it's only if you have a really, really clear sense of why you came together, what you came together to do and what drove that, that you can stay grounded in what is critical, even as you refine and develop ideas and approaches. Without this, we risk becoming another meaningless entity that started on a righteous journey but lost its way."

- Neelam Sharma, Community Services Unlimited

Equitable food-oriented development (EFOD) is both a development strategy and a growing movement using food and agriculture as a pathway to increased economic opportunity and better community health outcomes, prioritizing community-driven and -owned solutions to deepen power and agency in historically marginalized communities. EFOD has emerged from decades of work by community-based food systems organizations to build community health and create community economic development projects rooted in social justice. EFOD is the synthesis of lessons learned from navigating systemic barriers to accessing capital and seeking to increase the flow of capital to EFOD projects.

EQUITABLE FOOD-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (EFOD)

A development strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities and healthy neighborhoods, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically marginalized communities

A collaborative of EFOD organizations has led the development of this movement, and an important step is to document the processes that brought the group together and compelled them to create EFOD. In addition to leading community-building programming in their respective locations, EFOD Collaborative leaders make time to convene and collaborate for the advancement of the field on a national level. This document tells the Collaborative's origin story, outlining the history and evolution of EFOD in the United States.

In the fall of 2020, the EFOD Collaborative contracted with Equal Measure, a non-profit organization that partners with foundations, nonprofits, and government organizations to apply new ways of thinking and learning to advance social change. The EFOD-Equal Measure partnership was designed to support the Collaborative in documenting and learning from its work to date and in developing practitioner-informed metrics. The origin story is the product of conversations with the Steering Committee's Learning and Evaluation working group, phone interviews with co-founders of the movement and individuals who more recently joined the Collaborative, and a review of 10+ documents spanning 2017-2020 as well as the efod.org website. EFOD and Equal Measure worked together to craft the narrative.

The Collaborative's work began with a small peer group and expanded into a growing grassroots movement seeking to build the power and health of communities by creating food-based economic infrastructure. During the "groundwork" phase between 2011-2016, peers leaned on one another to discuss and understand frustrations they experienced in their work, to surface barriers to advancing their organizational missions, and to define EFOD.

Beginning in 2017 and continuing through 2020, the Collaborative shifted toward a more formalized "movement-building" phase, building infrastructure to support network growth and field-building.

The origin story narrative begins with a high-level timeline featuring key milestones, then moves into a description of the work from 2011 to the present, which highlights reflections from two Steering Committee members on their participation in the Collaborative. It ends with a detailed timeline providing more context for the various events and activities shaping the evolution of the movement.



2020 to present
**EXPANDING
ACCESS TO
RESOURCES**

EFOD Collaborative launches a fund pilot with eight organizations receiving a share of over \$1,000,000 in partnership with The Kresge Foundation. During the fall 2020 EFOD retreat, the Collaborative coalesces around a decision to pilot the first EFOD loan in 2021.

2018-19
**INCREASING
CAPACITY
AND GAINING
INSTITUTIONAL
POWER**

DAISA team assembles the “EFOD Collaborative” and Steering Committee, facilitates development of an EFOD definition, conducts a field scan, initiates development of metrics for impact, conducts analysis of funding and financing needs and opportunities, and serves as a thought partner for an emerging funding program. EFOD leaders participate in multiple convenings and build relationships with funders.

2017
**STRENGTHENING
NARRATIVE
POWER**

During the third Bay Area Meeting, EFOD practitioners focus on the EFOD vision, barriers/challenges, fundraising, growth/impact, action, and next steps. It is a larger gathering with more organizations and allies than the first two Bay Area meetings. A framing paper emerges from the meeting.

2015-16
**BUILDING NETWORK
POWER AND MOVEMENT
CAPACITY**

Malik Yakini of the **Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN)** and **D’Artagnan Scorza** of the **Social Justice Learning Institute** join conversations with Harvey and Sharma, and the first “Bay Area Meeting” brings together practitioners who formally begin referring to the work as “equitable food-oriented development.”

2011-14
**EARLY
CONVERSATIONS**

Dana Harvey, the Founding Executive Director of West Oakland-based **Mandela Partners (MP, formerly Mandela MarketPlace)**, and **Neelam Sharma**, Executive Director of South Los Angeles-based **Community Services Unlimited (CSU)**, engage in initial conversations about the need to generate understanding in the field about the work they are leading.

MOVEMENT-BUILDING PHASE

GROUNDWORK PHASE

GROUNDWORK PHASE (2011–2016)

EFOD grew from a small peer group to a grassroots movement seeking to build community power and bring deep, long-lasting change to the social, health, and economic conditions of local communities.

An expanding group of peers came together, surfacing barriers to leading their work and clarifying what differentiated EFOD from conventional food system initiatives.

As peers in the food justice field, EFOD practitioners have long supported each other, acting as mentors through informal networks, meeting at conferences and panels around the country, and remaining connected, exchanging ideas, sharing success stories, and discussing challenges and frustrations.

Equitable food-oriented development emerged from the connection between organizational leaders Dana Harvey, the Founding Executive Director of Mandela Partners (MP), and Neelam Sharma, Executive Director of Community Services Unlimited (CSU). They connected through shared experiences, forging an alliance to advance their community-centric and -driven work and to overcome systemic barriers rooted in racial and economic injustice.

Working with Malik Yakini, Founder and Executive Director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN), and D'Artagnan Scorza, Founder and former Executive Director of the Social Justice Learning Institute, the group brainstormed a framework and a narrative of community ownership and self-determination that would define their work, its core values, and commitments. Their shared feelings of deep anger at the glaring, ongoing, and multiple disparities in the allocation of resources by funders and lenders underpinned a commitment to change oppressive systems and practices.



(L-R): Dana Harvey, Neelam Sharma, D'Artagnan Scorza, and Malik Yakini. Photo credits: EFOD Collaborative; B The Change

As they refined their written ideas through dialogues at small gatherings and workshops, more practitioners became interested and engaged, and a rapidly growing support network began to thoughtfully define their emerging collective strategy to create transformative, long-term change in their communities.

Naming the Issues:

EFOD peers coalesced around problem definition.

Early EFOD practitioners identified two major barriers:

Lack of understanding and recognition for the unique value-add and impact of grassroots food-oriented development

EFOD practitioners were frustrated by the historical flattening and dismissal of the important elements that make communities vibrant and strong. From their own experiences and observations, they knew the work they were leading in their communities was creating meaningful change in the lives of their fellow residents and in the local food, health, and economic systems. Practitioners were typically working in historically marginalized communities of color where the needs and aspirations of the people were persistently ignored or silenced by corporate and political interests. EFOD activities were elevating cultural assets and cultivating enterprises owned by community members, long-term development of community member leadership, and neighborhood collaboration.

The group saw a proliferation of large-scale, heavily commercial projects, like the grocery store development and nutrition education programming dominating the discourse of “healthy food access,” and the funding of food projects with no cultural context. The commercial projects disappeared as soon as the funding ended, leaving no long-term benefits for the community, and often contributing to land loss, gentrification, and the distancing of community members.

Pervasive and inequitable funding and evaluation practices that hindered capacity-building

White supremacy culture¹ is pervasive in American systems that EFOD intersects with, including the powerful financial institutions that perpetuate deep-rooted discrimination and structural inequities.² EFOD organizational leaders experienced consistent barriers to accessing capital that limited their ability to develop community health- and wealth-generating projects. They saw a persistent racial gap between organizations that were well-funded and those that consistently struggled with funding, and they understood this dynamic mirrored the lack of capital in poor communities of color around the country. They were often overlooked and dismissed by funders and investors who favored supporting largely outsider-led and -serving enterprises that frequently exploited the innovative work of EFOD practitioners by co-opting the language and diluting the content of their community-led and -driven concepts. The urgency of documenting EFOD’s origin story is due in no small part to the need to ensure that the language and concepts that EFOD practitioners have worked hard to create are not co-opted and exploited by larger, better funded enterprises.

¹ For an explanation of this concept, see Tema Okun’s “White Supremacy Culture,” available at https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf.

² In her 2018 piece “What’s race got to do with it? Equity and philanthropic evaluation practice,” published by the American Journal of Evaluation, Jara Dean-Coffey documents how race and racism have influenced philanthropy and evaluation. She argues for “equitable evaluation” principles and practices that shift the current evaluation paradigm to one that centers racial equity.

The funding environment created a vicious cycle in which those with existing, visible capacity received more funding, and groups lacking capacity struggled to attract the attention and support of funders. Grassroots groups, perceived as high-risk and asset poor, received smaller grants and were not able to effectively build capacity. Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Program Related Investments (PRIs), despite their relevant missions to promote economic growth in poor and working-class communities, often did not use inclusive and equitable practices in working with community leaders.³

In one example, Capital Impact Partners administered the first round of the California FreshWorks Fund, the statewide fund for healthy food financing. In theory, the fund was meant to serve enterprises like the ones being catalyzed by Mandela Partners and CSU, yet EFOD practitioners perceived the Fund's decision committee to be very conservative as many applications from small, first-time business owner enterprises were denied. EFOD leaders understood these to be historic disparities rooted in racial capitalism,⁴ and in coming together, the Collective would seek to use the power of their collective voice to confront the disparities and to build economic power for long-term benefit to their communities.

Embedded in the funding and lending culture was evaluation, or the assessment of merit, worth, value, and impact. Conventional measures for community development work, like the number of jobs created, were typically not aligned with or relevant to EFOD projects, which generated real, but often less immediately quantifiable impacts. EFOD favored quality over quantity, depth over breadth, and long-term, sustainable changes for individuals and communities over short-term wins.

As grant and loan applicants, EFOD leaders often found themselves shut out of opportunities to access funds because the evaluation and measurement standards used by funders and financial institutions were and continue to be incompatible with values and approaches that shift power and ownership to communities. They felt pressured to use the type of language and metrics that would resonate with mainstream thinking but preferred to forge a new path, one that would recognize, value, and measure the complicated and nuanced benefits of EFOD work.

"We're not just treating the symptoms of the problem. We're not just addressing hunger. We're not just addressing access to food, but we're really addressing the question of power and how we shift power in communities so that agents have the capacity to exercise their agency and determine what happens in their own communities, including what happens with the economy in their community. And so many approaches to food system work are not rooted in this understanding of shifting power. And that's really, I think, the fundamental thing that makes EFOD food work different from the other food work that we see going on throughout the country."

—Malik Yakini, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network

³ For an example of an EFOD organization's difficulties in securing mission-aligned funding and finance, see the Collaborative's case study on the Detroit Food Commons, available at https://www.efod.org/uploads/1/2/6/1/126113221/efod_case_study_dbcfsn_1.pdf.

⁴ For an explanation of this concept, See Nancy Leong's "Racial Capitalism," available at <https://harvardlawreview.org/2013/06/racial-capitalism/>

Articulating the Development Strategy: EFOD practitioners clarified their stance and unique approach.

EFOD leaders saw the primary challenge before them as articulating their unique approach to food-oriented development and explaining the exponential value that investing in this approach could provide to underserved communities. The group spent significant time and energy across multiple meetings discussing and aligning around what differentiates EFOD from other forms of food-oriented development and the “so what?” of the approach. The group acknowledged some EFOD practices have existed for a long time, grounded in traditional agricultural and community-based food development approaches from around the world that coexist alongside more visible conventional development. One conspicuous difference was use of the term “equity,” as development work rooted in food is not a new concept. EFOD is designed to produce equitable outcomes for the people it serves. Recognizing this, organizational leaders reflected on their core values and ways of working and generated a common language, which later became “EFOD Criteria” (See Appendix).

The exercise supported the group’s own identity formation and strengthened their ability to communicate effectively with non-practitioners. Group members crafted their stance along key dimensions, including who leads and where power lies; who benefits; where and how food is grown, harvested, distributed, and sold; and whose cultural traditions are celebrated. In summary, the unique qualities of the EFOD development strategy include:

- ***EFOD is led and owned by people living in the community, particularly members of historically marginalized groups.***
- ***EFOD supports the creation of infrastructure that keeps power and ownership in communities for the long-term.***
- ***EFOD uplifts the cultural traditions and heritage of people of color.***
- ***EFOD intends to bring practitioners together in solidarity and in a supportive network that expands the capacity of its members.***
- ***EFOD is holistic and comprehensive.*** It acknowledges and embraces the interconnectedness of food, health, culture, environment, and the economy. It uses a holistic path to stronger, healthier, and more inclusive and equitable communities.
- ***Most importantly, EFOD is systems change work.*** With food as an entry point, it seeks equity and justice in the social determinants of health and in economic opportunity and community development. It recognizes food systems as a tangible approach to identifying and shifting power structures toward community ownership in an ultimately self-sustaining way.

MOVEMENT-BUILDING PHASE (2017–present)

The Collaborative increases capacity and infrastructure to grow the network, build the field, and amplify its voice.

EFOD leaders began to organize to address key barriers in their work and to differentiate their approach from other versions of food-oriented development. They pursued opportunities to amplify their voices through attendance at convenings across the country, including three major convenings that took place in the San Francisco Bay Area between 2015 and 2017. In addition to in-person meetings, EFOD co-founders engaged in numerous phone conversations and email exchanges to advance and refine their ideas. Champions of the movement spread the word, generating interest and buy-in and bringing on new partners, increasing the number of EFOD organizations and allies included in the network.

Growing larger meant that they needed more infrastructure to manage their growth. In 2017, EFOD co-founders Harvey and Sharma connected with Daniel Ross of DAISA Enterprises, a consulting firm specializing in strategy, operations, and evaluation services for social enterprises focused on developing more equitable food systems. Prior to creating DAISA, Ross was known to co-founders as an EFOD practitioner with *Nuestras Raíces*, a history germane to this partnership: it meant Ross understood the concerns and frustrations of the co-founders and that they felt confidence in entrusting the development of this emerging field to DAISA.



EFOD Retreat Little Rock, Arkansas, November 2019. Photo credit: EFOD Collaborative

Another critical component in the success of this partnership and the extraordinary growth of EFOD was Trisha Chakrabarti’s transition from her position as a core staff member at Mandela Partners to joining the DAISA team, where she took on the bulk of the day-to-day EFOD management work. Chakrabarti brought with her an acute awareness of what EFOD co-founders were working on and was able to hit the ground running in taking on the tasks needed to build the Collaborative.

The dedicated and informed staff time provided the capacity to quickly bring together a national network of EFOD leaders, the “Collaborative,” and assemble the Steering Committee, which first met as a formal group during September 2018. DAISA supported the group in generating consensus around a definition for EFOD and scanning the national landscape to identify EFOD organizations. They also led workstreams which included: planning learning convenings for the group, facilitating the development of criteria for characterizing EFOD work and a corresponding self-assessment, theoretical framework, and appropriate metrics for EFOD, and later, assessing funding/financing needs and serving as a thought partner for an emerging funding program. All these DAISA-supported activities contributed to a rapid period of growth in EFOD’s field-, network-, and movement-building efforts.⁵

⁵ As Stachowiak, et al. (2020) note in “Not Always Movements: Multiple Approaches to Advance Large-Scale Social Change,” social change approaches, including movements, network development, and field-building strategies, can align and work together concurrently to advance a group’s mission. These approaches have different underlying theories of change and distinguishing features but overlap in multiple ways.



Haleh Zandi. Photo credit: LinkedIn

Haleh Zandi, Planting Justice

Uplifting the EFOD field through collaboration

"It's important for organizations to build alliances across this work and to not compete for funding – but to find ways to collaborate and build off of each other's strengths and not be siloed in our work."

Background

Haleh Zandi, co-founder and co-director at Planting Justice

Planting Justice of Oakland, CA, was founded in 2009 with a mission to "Grow food. Grow jobs. Grow community." Guided by the three strategic areas of food sovereignty, economic justice, and community healing, Planting Justice works in partnership with a diversity of stakeholders in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Joining the EFOD Collaborative & Steering Committee

In 2018, Planting Justice co-founders Zandi and Gavin Raders were invited by Dana Harvey of Mandela MarketPlace to attend formative meetings of the EFOD Collaborative. Zandi joined the EFOD Steering Committee in 2019, leaning into the synergy of working with like-minded practitioners who also wanted to advance systemic change in philanthropy and financing. Two factors support Zandi's and others' participation in the group: 1) DAISA's role as EFOD's coordinating entity in shepherding the Collaborative "forward in really tangible ways," and 2) compensation for their time, which acknowledges that members are under varying degrees of time and financial constraints as they manage obligations to both their own organizations and the Collaborative's efforts.

Collaborating to build assets and resources in the field

Leading an organization is demanding, yet Zandi finds participation in the EFOD Collaborative grows, rather than reduces, her capacity. For example, with the launch of the EFOD pilot fund in 2020, she embraced the opportunity to expand her knowledge and skillset about operating a fund. The fund demonstrates the potential of the EFOD Collaborative to present an alternative path, beyond conventional funding mechanisms, to connect practitioners in the field with necessary resources. At the 2020 Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders Conference, Zandi shared insights on the challenges that organizations like Planting Justice navigate within existing philanthropic processes and called upon funders to reexamine their models. She expressed pride in the successful distribution from the EFOD fund of more than \$1 million to EFOD-aligned organizations across the country – and the Collaborative's efforts to "uplift organizations together."



Photo credit: Planting Justice

From 2018 on, DAISA also helped the Collaborative document its work and strengthen its online presence by launching and maintaining the efod.org website where it published literature, including a brown paper and case studies.

The Collaborative piloted the EFOD Fund, a financing tool designed to be democratically owned and operated by practitioners and funding/financing allies. Eligible candidates included community-led, food-based community and economic development organizations whose work aligned with the EFOD criteria and fell along a spectrum of maturity levels. Besides providing much needed resources and technical assistance to these groups, the fund aimed to influence changes in the practices of philanthropic and lending institutions. During late 2020, The Kresge Foundation funded eight EFOD organizations as part of this initiative, which became the foundation's first-ever participatory grantmaking process.

In 2020, the Collaborative turned its attention to documenting its movement-building to date and establishing practitioner-informed metrics to codify and substantiate the value and impact of EFOD in local communities. The Collaborative brought on Equal Measure as a learning and evaluation partner to support these efforts. 2020 culminated with a Steering Committee retreat where members coalesced around strategic decisions to pilot the first EFOD loan in 2021, to spend 2021 working towards an independent structure for both the EFOD Collaborative and EFOD Fund, and to better articulate the mission and vision of the collaborative's work. The group also celebrated its many accomplishments to date.



Krysten Aguilar, La Semilla Food Center

Pushing to shift power in public policy and philanthropy

"I think that moving all of the pieces at once is really important. We're lucky enough as an organization to currently have the capacity to be able to not only fulfill our mission regionally, which is really our programmatic focus, and continue to be really effective there--but have the capacity also to participate in broader, more national movements, that move the needle. And so, I think whenever we have the capacity, then we should be using it."

Krysten Aguilar. Photo credit: EFOD Collaborative

Background

Krysten Aguilar, co-executive director at La Semilla Food Center

Established in 2010, [La Semilla Food Center](#)'s mission is to build a healthy, self-reliant, fair, and sustainable food system in the Paso del Norte region of southern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. Besides EFOD, La Semilla is also affiliated with the Food Policy Network, linked to the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, and the HEAL Food Alliance.

Joining the EFOD Collaborative & Steering Committee

Aguilar connected with Mariela Cedeño of Mandela Partners at the Healthy Food Access annual convening in Washington, D.C., when Mandela Partners presented on EFOD. She was drawn to the opportunity to participate in a national conversation on how to use EFOD to address root causes of inequity in local communities, to advance community-based investing, and to join forces with other organizations to "move the field on a broader scale." A former policy coordinator at La Semilla, Aguilar joined the EFOD Collaborative with experience in leading state-level efforts to shift public policy and funding practices toward EFOD work. Joining the EFOD Collaborative built on La Semilla's system change efforts.

Reflections on shifting power in public policy and philanthropy

Working to change public policy to be supportive of EFOD is hard work. According to Aguilar, "Policy is inherently a tool that is upholding the status quo," which is heavily steeped in white supremacy. Her BIPOC-led organization is working on a state-level Healthy Food Financing program in New Mexico, built on EFOD principles. A major element of their policy effort has been to push public policy to acknowledge and embrace equity language and tenets.

EFOD is also pushing on philanthropy in its efforts to move the field and advance systems change. In solidarity with the EFOD Collaborative, Aguilar and her team have been strategizing to change mindsets and practices in philanthropy to prompt foundation leadership "to begin to relinquish power and distribute their dollars more equitably and broadly, instead of hoarding stolen wealth." Aguilar's participation on the Communications working group of the Steering Committee provides a dedicated space to collaborate with others on how to achieve these goals.



Photo credit: La Semilla Food Center

CONCLUSION

Today, after years of groundwork through community-led process and reflection, the EFOD Collaborative leads with a strong sense of its identity and principles. The development strategy and movement arose in response to inequities and power imbalances in local food systems and community development projects. It emerged as an alternative approach to conventional food-oriented development by being community-led and -driven and by celebrating the cultural assets, heritage, and capabilities of historically marginalized communities.

EFOD's origin story is about the power of relationships and shared experiences. Individuals deeply invested in the work banded together to name structural barriers and to organize to "shift the conditions holding the problem in place."⁶ By identifying and leveraging platforms, like national convenings, to communicate about the structural issues they saw and articulate EFOD's value and impact for individuals and communities, EFOD leaders and champions grew and strengthened the movement.

Partnering with DAISA Enterprises to address management, capacity- and field-building needs and opportunities was an influential asset to EFOD's evolution and its trajectory. Now that the Collaborative has made progress in adding to its numbers and affirming its identity, it is working to build the capacity of local practitioners to learn from each other, collaborate, and raise capital.

⁶ FSG has coined this description of systems change.

Detailed Timeline

The evolution of the EFOD development strategy and movement began in 2011 with early conversations among a small group of practitioners, although the work of EFOD organizations has been in practice for decades. The EFOD movement, embodied by the EFOD Collaborative, emerged from a desire to unite around shared challenges and experiences in their work and to uplift and build power from within their communities. Over the years and through multiple convenings, especially on the West Coast, the group grew into a national network of practitioners organizing around their common interests for the movement: differentiating the unique value and impact EFOD was having in communities from other types of food-oriented development, coalescing around practitioner-informed metrics, and securing resources to strengthen EFOD's viability and sustainability across the country.⁷

2011-2014: Early Conversations

- **Dana Harvey, the Founding Executive Director of West Oakland-based Mandela Partners (MP, formerly Mandela MarketPlace), and Neelam Sharma, Executive Director of South Los Angeles-based Community Services Unlimited (CSU), engage in initial conversations about the need to generate understanding in the field about the work they are leading.** Harvey and Sharma support each other, exchanging ideas about how to articulate and advance the EFOD agenda. They share a frustration that funders and investors bypass investment in their organizations to fund largely outsider-led and -serving enterprises, failing to recognize or measure the deep social, health, and economic impacts possible when investments are made in the expertise of on-the-ground leadership.
- Throughout this period, **Harvey and Sharma serve on various panels and participate in multiple convenings across the country to elevate their work.** They connect with values-aligned practitioners. They recruit colleagues from their professional networks with shared values and frustrations, coalescing around their vision for community-owned development.
- **2012 - CSU creates the "Sankofa Project,"** an ongoing multi-dimensional project responding to the lack of visibility of EFOD work.
- On the national scene, **broader recognition about food issues emerges.** These relate to health (e.g., food access, diet linked to chronic disease), the environment (e.g., risks of overreliance on monoculture farming and fossil fuel use for transportation), and local opportunities (e.g., urban farming, community supported agriculture, farm-to-table restaurants).

"It takes time to build the trust, relationships, and groundwork in the community to engage people in the idea that their personal investment is going to lead to something. It's not coming in and dropping out quickly. It takes the perseverance to stay with a community to make sure that at the end of the day, the thing promised is going to happen."

—Dana Harvey

as quoted in "Cultivating Equitable Food-Oriented Development: Lessons from West Oakland"

⁷ Concepts from the following timeline phases derive from the Innovation Network's "Social Movement Theory of Change": "Building network power and movement capacity," "Strengthening narrative power," and "Increasing capacity and gaining institutional power." Available at https://www.innonet.org/media/2019_11_04_SMLP_Concepts_2-pager.pdf.

2015-16: Building Network Power and Movement Capacity

- *October 2015*– CSU’s multi-media **Sankofa Project** exhibition debuts at the **William Grant Still Arts Center** and is open to the public for several months. The focal piece is a video that juxtaposes the approach of the TCE-funded project with that of EFOD’s grassroots approach.
- *November 2015* – **Malik Yakini of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) joins conversations with Harvey and Sharma.** With common roots and philosophies in the Black Panther Party and Liberation movement, all three share progressive views of food system players and the holistic approach that centers on community.
- *December 2015* – **First Bay Area Meeting.** Present at the two-day convening in Oakland, CA, are **Mandela Partners, Community Services Unlimited, and Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, as well as the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI), founded and led by Dr. D’Artagnan Scorza.** The group discusses essential elements of EFOD: “What do we mean by EFOD? Why does this matter?” They debate the type of evaluation that could truly measure the value and impact of EFOD work and the incentives for funders and lenders to support EFOD. The gathering seeks to take ownership of the language that binds the group, in part to prevent its co-optation or dilution by conventional developers, funders, or other non-practitioners. The initial meeting leads to a series of dialogues, gathering more practitioners and allied stakeholders to document their innovative community initiatives and differentiate them from conventional food-based projects.
- **MP, CSU, and DBCFSN submit a shared proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Evidence for Action program to support field development in evaluation.** The proposal is ultimately rejected. In the proposal development process, the EFOD team and the evaluation partner struggle to identify an “intervention” that they could measure the effect of, surfacing the dearth of metrics that could accurately portray the long-term, deep, and systemic impact of an EFOD approach.
- **The California Endowment (TCE)** funds the American Heart Association to create school gardens in South Los Angeles and Inglewood. CSU and SJLI, with past work over multiple years in these communities, feel overlooked by TCE.
- Practitioners formally begin referring to the work as “**equitable food-oriented development.**”
- Sharma pens an **essay about EFOD** as part of a book published by the University of Wisconsin.
- *June 2016* – **Second Bay Area Meeting.** With a larger attendance than the first Bay Area meeting in 2015, Mandela Partners funds the convening and travel for Sharma and Yakini.

2017: Strengthening Narrative Power

- **Olivia Rebanal of Capital Impact Partners in California** engages in conversations with EFOD practitioners on shifting her community development financial institution (CDFI)'s policy and practice toward providing resources to more community-based organizations implementing the EFOD development strategy. Rebanal is an early champion of EFOD and seeks to spark change within the CDFI industry.
- *May 2017 – Third Bay Area Meeting.* The convening in Oakland at PolicyLink focuses on EFOD vision, barriers/challenges, fundraising, growth/impact, action, and next steps. It is a larger gathering with more organizations and allies: Planting Justice, Food Lab Detroit, Capital Impact Partners, and DAISA attend in addition to Mandela Partners and Community Services Unlimited. Out of this meeting a framing paper emerges in October 2017.
- *June 2017 – At the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders Conference in Gainesville, FL,* Sharma shares the challenges to accessing capital faced by her organization and other EFOD practitioners with funders and lenders, including the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and Self-Help Credit Union. **Daniel Ross from DAISA Enterprises**, a firm with a deep history of food systems, entrepreneurship, and social change work, attends. Harvey and Sharma connect with Ross and discuss DAISA engaging with the EFOD group. Prior relationship and history with Ross from his previous work in the field supports trust to work with a consultant.
- *July 2017 -* PolicyLink publishes a feature on Mandela Partners, "[Cultivating Equitable Food-Oriented Development: Lessons from West Oakland.](#)"
- **Harvey, Sharma, Trisha Chakrabarti, and others begin building the EFOD-DAISA engagement.** With support from The Kresge Foundation, the growing EFOD Collaborative invites DAISA Enterprises to develop a scope of work focused on building the capacity of the Collaborative.

2018-19: Increasing Capacity and Gaining Institutional Power

- **EFOD leaders participate in multiple convenings and build relationships with funders:** Northern California Community Loan Fund Panel (June), Southern California Grantmakers tour of the Paul Robeson Community Wellness Center (October), W. K. Kellogg Foundation tour of the Paul Robeson Community Wellness Center (October), BALLE Summit (November), EFOD presentation at the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders gathering (May 2019).
- *April 2018* – During a practitioner panel and workshop at **PolicyLink’s Equity Summit in Chicago**, Harvey and Sharma present on EFOD. DAISA attends and continues building connection with EFOD leaders.
- **DAISA team receives a contract from The Kresge Foundation to support a year of EFOD field-building work.** DAISA team (Chakrabarti and Ross) lead development of collaborative infrastructure, field research, and scanning of the national EFOD landscape. Activities include: assemble the steering committee, facilitate development of an EFOD definition, conduct field scan, initiate development of metrics for impact, conduct analysis of funding and financing needs and opportunities, and serve as a thought partner for an emerging funding program.
- *September 2018* – DAISA brings together **EFOD Steering Committee**; monthly calls begin.
- *October 2018* - **The Wallace Center emerges as an important early champion of EFOD**, hosting the EFOD Learning Journey in Minneapolis.
- *February 2019* – **“The Case for Equitable Food Oriented Development—Food Justice for All”** blog post is written by Kharmika Alston and published on World Food Policy Center’s website.
- *March 2019* – **EFOD co-founder Dana Harvey passes away after battling cancer, shaking the EFOD community.**
- *April 2019* –
 - **Convening at New Communities’ 1,600-acre retreat in Albany, GA.** Hosted by DAISA and the EFOD Collaborative, the first day brings together practitioners to brainstorm the Collaborative’s shared purpose. The second day introduces the EFOD concept to a group of **funders and lenders** in the community development space, including guests from The Kresge Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Reinvestment Fund, Self-Help Credit Union, BALLE, The Food Trust, and Common Market.
 - **EFOD Collaborative develops “EFOD Criteria” and “EFOD Theoretical Framework”** (See Appendix). These resources promote better external understanding about the value of EFOD. The criteria are widely used and cited as clear examples of the definition of EFOD projects and initiatives. The theoretical framework is used less often.
 - www.efod.org launches

- November 2019 –
 - EFOD Collaborative publishes [brown paper](#), “Equitable Food-Oriented Development - Building Community Power,” supported by DAISA and The Kresge Foundation.
 - Wallace Center at Winrock International [announces](#) its second cohort of Regional Food Economies Fellows, which focuses on the emerging practice of EFOD. “The selected Fellows are recognized leaders in their own organizations and communities as well as nationally and are pursuing inclusive development that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy neighborhoods, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically marginalized communities.” Fellows include Neelam Sharma of Community Services Unlimited, Mariela Cedeño of Mandela Partners, and Lorena Andrade of La Mujer Obrera.
 - Webinar on EFOD hosted by the National Good Food Network, Wallace Center at Winrock International. Sharma presents history and definition of the development strategy and movement. Others present case studies, resources, and recommendations for the field.
 - Following the convening on Equitable Food & Farming Finance hosted by the Wallace Center at Winrock International, the EFOD Steering Committee gathers in Little Rock, AR, for a two-day retreat. Meeting involves breakout sessions on the EFOD Fund and evaluation/metrics development, leading to the “EFOD Impact Metrics” document.
 - During the EFOD National Gathering, the Collaborative designs the three Steering Committee working groups (Learning and Evaluation, Development and Creation, and Communications) and sets their group priorities. The EFOD Fund is first prototyped here, and EFOD leaders engage in conversation with allies Darrow Isaacman-VanWertz (Self Help), Daniel Tellalian (Angel City Advisors), and Philip Otienoburo (Self Help). Discussion helps to illuminate the inner workings of CDFI lending processes for EFOD projects and identifies some of the barriers at that stage.
- DAISA releases two case studies, one on the [Detroit Food Commons](#) and the other on the [Paul Robeson Community Wellness Center](#), providing practical examples of how organizations innovate to build equitable community food systems.



2020-PRESENT: Expanding Access to Resources

- **Distributing over \$1,000,000, the EFOD Collaborative launches a fund pilot with eight organizations in partnership with The Kresge Foundation.** The pilot is designed to be democratically owned and operated by practitioners and funding/financing allies. Organizations include: Black Food Sovereignty Coalition, Portland, OR; Boston Farms, Boston, MA; Detroit Black Community Food Security Network Inc., Detroit, MI; Dreaming Out Loud, Washington, D.C.; El Departamento de la Comida, Caguas, PR; and Floreciendo (DBA: Oakland Bloom), Oakland, CA.
 - **Detroit Food Commons project**, is underway with planned grand opening during spring 2022. It is a new, 34,000 square-foot building being constructed on Wood Avenue in downtown Detroit that will house the Detroit People's Food Co-op, four incubator kitchens, a 5,000-square foot community meeting space, and offices for the DBCFSN.
- The Kresge Foundation also funds more than \$200,000 in funding to the Collaborative to create a **complementary network of BIPOC technical assistance providers** to support the fund pilot grantees and additional EFOD organizations.
- **EFOD advises the creation and implementation of the Virginia Food Access and Investment Fund**, which uses the EFOD framework in its design. This emerges as a learning experience for the Collaborative on how to maintain fidelity to EFOD principles. Conversations about a similar statewide fund in New Mexico begin.
- *March 2020* - **Steering Committee retreat in New Orleans** focuses on a review of conventional funding and finance processes for EFOD projects and strategizing how to position EFOD as a unique approach.
- The Collaborative sees the **inaccessibility of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans** (even when administered through CDFIs), stemming from federal recovery efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as another sign of the lack of financial support for marginalized communities and projects like those built by EFOD organizations.
- Managed and facilitated by DAISA, **EFOD Collaborative Steering Committee includes nine EFOD organizations.**
- *September 2020* – **“How Innovative CDFIs Fund Equitable Food Oriented Development” report is released by the Duke World Food Policy Center.** The report explores how three Community Development Financial Institutions drive economic growth in low-income and historically marginalized communities through EFOD and elevates understanding about the practices of CDFIs that are effective funders of EFOD in their communities.
- *October 2020* – **DAISA hires Equal Measure to advance origin story development and metrics development.**
- *November 2020* – During the **EFOD retreat**, the Collaborative coalesces around a decision to pilot the first EFOD loan in 2021, spend 2021 working towards an independent structure for both the EFOD Collaborative and EFOD Fund, and better articulate the mission and vision of the collaborative’s work. The group also celebrates its many accomplishments to date.

“Inclusive Action’s success means [first-time] entrepreneurs are recognized and honored as a critical part of the economy. They are seen as just as valuable as an Amazon headquarters or a tech company moving into the city - measured not just by revenue but by building neighborhood connections, connection to the city, hiring locally, etc., that are not valued in the current system.”

– Rudy Espinoza,
Inclusive Action for the City

from field scan interviews conducted by DAISA in
2018

APPENDIX

EFOD Criteria		INDICATORS OF EFOD	CONTRADICTION OF EFOD
Equity- and justice-first	Equity & justice are part of mission, unapologetically represent a historically marginalized community, clearly working on systems change, power change & accountability in operations; ongoing commitment to teaching/including larger transformation; involved in other organizing, advocacy, or policy work – it's not just about food	Language and mission is general or just development or food related (i.e. "all lives matter"); community transformation is an intention but not yet in practice	
Place-based	Embedded in a community or regional network with strong community identity; prioritize culture and artistic and cultural expression; a history of work in this community; leadership has historical connection to social justice in that community	Not connected to community; national or regional without accountability to particular community with distinct identity	
Use market-based/business strategies	Developing new markets and enterprises, creating real economic opportunities, sustainable	Exclusively education, policy, or awareness building; no direct service programming; solely community gardens, no sales or marketing aspect	
Community leadership development/community organizing	Board of Directors and top leadership is representative of the community organization serves, often People of Color-led; work is by & for community members; critical convener role in development projects, serving to maintain community sovereignty, local/county planning involvement	Community served has no real power, decision-making, living-wage jobs in organization	
Community ownership	Building community-member assets, equity. often uses alternative economic structures and decision-making processes so community members can have ownership (i.e. co-ops); representative board membership	Outside capital, business owned by outside institutions or people; primarily job creation or training	

EFOD Theoretical Framework at the Local Level

If individuals from within the community collaborate on creating local food economies that are owned and held by community members, then they can build healthier, more inclusive and sustainable neighborhoods that sow community pride and power.

